

POSITIVE DECLARATION

Project Identification

La Central
CEQR No. 15HPD041X
ULURP Nos. Pending

SEQRA Classification: Unlisted

Lead Agency

Department of Housing Preservation &
Development
100 Gold Street New York, NY 10038
Contact: Patrick Blanchfield
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Name, Description and Location of Proposal:

La Central

The proposal involves an application by the City of New York – Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD), on behalf of the project sponsor, La Central Manager LLC, for approval of several discretionary actions (collectively, the “Proposed Actions”) including the disposition of City-owned property and designation/approval of an Urban Development Action Area Project (UDAAP), a zoning map amendment, and special permits to establish a Large-Scale General Development (LSGD). In addition, HPD may provide construction financing for the proposed mixed-use developments facilitated by the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Actions would facilitate the development of five new buildings containing affordable and supportive housing, local retail and other commercial space, community facility space, public and private open space, and parking on an underutilized site of approximately 4.3 acres (the “Project Area”) in the Melrose neighborhood of the Bronx, Community District 1.

The Project Area is comprised of an assemblage of six City-owned properties collectively referred to as Parcels A, B, and C. The Proposed Actions would further the trend of residential redevelopment in the South Bronx and enliven currently underutilized City-owned sites. Parcel A consists of four lots (Block 2361, Lots 1, 25, and 26, and 50) with frontage on East 152nd Street (demapped in 1975 but currently open to traffic through the Project Area), East 153rd Street, Bergen Avenue, Brook Avenue, and Westchester Avenue. Parcel A has a total area of approximately 128,808 square feet (sf) and is currently vacant with the exception of the demapped portion of East 152nd Street which extends between Bergen and Brook avenues. Parcel B (Block 2294, Lot 32) is at the southernmost extent of the Project Area, located to the south of Parcel A and is generally bounded by Westchester Avenue to the north, Bergen Avenue to the west, and the elevated IRT #2 and #5 subway tracks to the south. Parcel B has a total area of approximately 50,551 sf and is currently occupied with a parking lot and a vacant two-story building (483 Westchester Avenue). Parcel C (Block 2363, Lot 1) is at the northernmost extent of the Project Area and has frontage on East 153rd Street, Bergen Avenue, and Brook Avenue. Parcel C has a total area of approximately 7,134 sf and is currently vacant.



The Proposed Actions would facilitate the redevelopment of the above-referenced properties with an approximately 1.1 million gross-square-foot (gsf) mixed-use development encompassing five separate buildings ranging from 9 stories to 25 stories in height (referred to as Buildings A through E). Overall, the Proposed Actions would result in the development of approximately 832 units of affordable housing, approximately 160 units of supportive housing, approximately 46,800 gsf of local retail and commercial space, an approximately 50,500 gsf YMCA facility, and approximately 32,700 gsf of other community facility space (collectively, the “Proposed Project”). The Proposed Project would also include an approximately 262-space accessory underground parking garage (beneath Building B), a total of approximately 32,481 gsf of public courtyard open space (Parcel A), approximately 8,521 gsf of private courtyard open space (Parcel A), an approximately 7,134 sf public skate park (Parcel C), an approximately 7,625 sf public rooftop farm (Parcel A), and approximately 43,385 gsf of private rooftop open space (all five buildings).

Building A would be located on the southernmost Parcel B, would be 12 stories (approximately 125 feet) tall and would be comprised of approximately 215 units of affordable housing (approximately 232,700 gsf), approximately 15,400 gsf of local retail and commercial space, and approximately 52,900 gsf of community facility space. At this time, the building’s community facility space is anticipated to be occupied by an approximately 50,500 gsf YMCA facility and an approximately 2,400 gsf public rooftop farm. The main residential entrance to Building A would be located on Bergen Avenue, while the commercial, retail, and community facility uses would be accessible from Bergen and Westchester Avenues.

Buildings B, C, D, and E would be located on Parcel A bounded by Bergen Avenue, Brook Avenue, Westchester Avenue, and East 153rd Street. Each building would be located towards the edges of Parcel A in order to allow for an approximately 41,002 sf landscaped courtyard in the center of the parcel. The majority of the courtyard would be publicly accessible and each building would have entrances facing the courtyard. A portion of the courtyard would be located along the demapped portion of East 152nd Street between Bergen and Brook Avenues, in order to maintain the existing below-grade sewer easement in that location.

Building B would rise to a height of 13 stories (approximately 125 feet) and would have frontage along Bergen, Brook, and Westchester Avenues. The building would be comprised of approximately 281 units of affordable housing (309,600 gsf) and approximately 29,100 gsf of local retail and commercial space. At this time, commercial space in Building B is anticipated to be occupied by a television studio while ground-floor retail space is anticipated to be occupied by local retailers. An underground parking garage with up to approximately 262 accessory parking spaces would be located beneath Building B. The garage would be accessible from Bergen Avenue. Residential entrances to Building B would be located on Brook Avenue and within the courtyard, while local retail and commercial uses would be accessible from Bergen and Westchester Avenues.

Building C would rise to a height of 13 stories (approximately 125 feet) and would have frontage along Brook Avenue. The building would be comprised of approximately 137 units of affordable



housing (153,900 gsf) and approximately 8,600 gsf of community facility space, totaling approximately 162,500 gsf. At this time, the community facility space is anticipated to be occupied by a recording studio. Residential entrances to Building C would be located along Brook Avenue and within the courtyard, while community facility uses would be accessible from Brook Avenue.

Building D would rise to a height of 9 stories (approximately 93 feet) and would have frontage along Bergen Avenue. The building would be primarily comprised of approximately 160 units of supportive housing anticipated to be operated by non-profit social service providers Common Ground and Comunilife. Building D would also include approximately 4,400 gsf of other community facility uses on the first floor and approximately 7,300 gsf of office space assumed for Common Ground on the second floor. Entrances to the supportive housing would be located along Bergen Avenue and within the courtyard, while the ground floor community facility space and office spaces would be accessible from Bergen Avenue.

Building E would have frontage along Bergen Avenue, Brook Avenue, and East 153rd Street. At a height of 25 stories (approximately 249 feet) it would be the tallest of the five proposed buildings. Building E would be comprised of approximately 198 units of affordable housing (213,100 gsf), approximately 2,300 gsf of local retail and commercial space, and approximately 10,000 gsf of community facility space. At this time, ground-floor retail space is anticipated to be occupied by local retailers and the community facility space is anticipated to be occupied by a day care facility and other community facility uses. Residential entrances would be located on Brook Avenue and the south side of the building facing the courtyard, while the retail and community facility uses would be accessible from East 153rd Street and Bergen/Brook Avenues, respectively.

HPD is seeking disposition authority for six City-owned properties (Block 2363, Lot 1; Block 2361, Lots 1, 25, 26, and 50; and Block 2294, Lot 32) to facilitate redevelopment of the Project Area. In conjunction with the disposition, HPD is seeking project approval and designation of the Proposed Project as a UDAAP pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law, which must be authorized by the City Council.

The Project Area is currently located in two zoning districts: M1-1 and C4-4. The proposed zoning map amendment would extend an existing C6-2 zoning district southward from the east side of Brook Avenue into the Project Area. The southernmost boundary of the proposed C6-2 district would be located 90 feet north of East 149th Street. C6-2 districts permit commercial uses up to 6.0 FAR, residential uses up to 6.02 FAR, and community facility uses up to 6.5 FAR. There are no maximum building heights and off-street parking is typically not required. C6-2 districts have a residential district equivalent of R8 and the Proposed Project would be constructed under height factor regulations. In R8 districts, height factor regulations permit an FAR ranging from 0.94 to 6.02 and an open space ratio (OSR) ranging from 5.9 to 11.9. When utilizing height factor regulations, a taller building may be obtained by providing more open space and there are no absolute height limits. However, buildings cannot penetrate the sky exposure plane, which begins 85' above curb level.



Lastly, HPD is seeking three special permits for a LSGD in order to:

- Permit distribution of total allowable floor area and required open space within the LSGD without regard to zoning lot lines pursuant to ZR § 74-743(a)(1);
- Permit location of buildings without regard to applicable yard, court, distance between buildings, and height and setback regulations pursuant to ZR § 74-743(a)(2). This waiver is intended to permit: exceedances of the maximum front wall height, encroachment of required setback distances, and violation of the sky exposure planes at Buildings A, B, C, and D; obstruction in the required rear yard of Building A; and violation of the sky exposure plane at Building E; and
- Permit residential and non-residential uses to be arranged without regard for location regulations of ZR § 32-42 pursuant to ZR § 74-744(b). This waiver is intended to permit the placement of a Use Group 10 television studio on the first and second floors of Building B adjacent to residential uses.

The proposed special permits would allow greater design flexibility for the purpose of better site planning and urban design. The height, bulk, and setback waivers granted under the LSGD special permit would maximize the development of affordable and supportive housing in the Project Area.

Measures would be incorporated as part of construction of the Proposed Project to ensure that no significant adverse impacts related to hazardous materials, noise, and air quality would result from the Proposed Actions. These include construction in accordance with a New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)-approved Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and Construction Health and Safety Plan (CHASP) to address hazardous materials contamination, appropriate levels of window-wall attenuation to address ambient noise, and certain fuel and emission height restrictions for proposed HVAC systems to address stationary source air quality. The measures are described in further detail in the Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) and Draft Scope of Work for the EIS. The measures would be incorporated into the design, construction, and/or operation of the Proposed Project. HPD would require the implementation of the measures to the satisfaction of the City through the Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) between HPD and the project sponsor.

The Proposed Project has a build year of 2020 and would be constructed in two phases. Absent the Proposed Actions, existing conditions in the Project Area would remain. In addition to the actions described above, the project sponsors may seek construction financing for one or more of the proposed buildings from HPD, the New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC), the New York State Housing Finance Agency (HFA), the New York State Homeless Housing Assistance Program (HHAP), and New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR). Financing through HPD may include federal sources of funding provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).



Statement of Significant Effect:

HPD has determined, pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617.7, that the Proposed Actions may have a significant effect on the quality of the environment as detailed in the following environmental impacts, and that a targeted environmental impact statement will be required:

1. The Proposed Actions may result in significant adverse impacts related to community facilities and services in the vicinity of the affected area.
2. The Proposed Actions may result in significant adverse impacts to transportation in the vicinity of the affected area.
3. The Proposed Actions may result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character in the affected area.

Supporting Statement:

The above determination is based on an Environmental Assessment Statement prepared for the action which finds that:

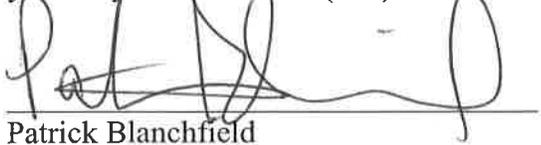
1. Community Facilities – The Proposed Actions would not result in the direct displacement of any existing community facility. However, analyses would be warranted for public schools as the Proposed Actions would introduce a new residential population to the area.
2. Transportation – The Proposed Actions would generate additional vehicular traffic and increased demand for pedestrian traffic as well as transit ridership. These new trips have the potential to affect the area’s transportation systems.
3. Neighborhood Character – The Proposed Actions have the potential to alter vehicular traffic, pedestrian traffic, and transit ridership conditions, which have the potential to affect the area’s neighborhood character.

Public Scoping:

HPD, as CEQR lead agency, hereby requests that the project sponsor prepare or have prepared, at their option, a targeted Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in accordance with 6 NYCRR 617.9(b) and Sections 6-08 and 6-12 of Executive Order No. 91 of 1977 as amended (City Environmental Quality Review).

A public scoping meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at 4:00 PM at the offices of SoBRO, 555 Bergen Avenue, Bronx NY 10455. Written comments will be accepted by the lead agency until the close of business on November 16, 2015.

This determination has been prepared in accordance with Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law. Should you have any questions pertaining to this Positive Declaration, you may contact me at (212) 863-5056.


Patrick Blanchfield

10 / 5 / 15
Date

Executive Director of Environmental Planning, HPD



c:

Eric Wilson (HPD)
Ted Weinstein (HPD)
Winifred Campbell (HPD)
Susan Kensky (HPD)
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Kenrick Ou (SCA)
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Jeremy Parnes (NYCT)
Patrick Dougherty (NYCT)
Judith McClain (NYCT)
Susan Amron (NYC Law)
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Philip Perazio (NYSOPRHP)
Venetia Lannon (NYSDEC)
John Cryan (NYSDEC)
Heather Spitzberg (NYSHCR)
Len Sedney (NYS HFA)
Raju Mann (City Council Land Use Review)
Maria del Carmen Arroyo (Council Member, District 17)
Cedric L. Loftin (District Manager, Bronx CB 1)
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